



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Mothers Chart Course for Better Growth in Cambodia



HARVEST

Growth monitoring can help ensure children develop properly.

Heam Theanglay is a village health volunteer in Cambodia's Pursat province. She has tried for years to convince mothers in her area to use growth monitoring, a technique for tracking the relationship between a child's weight and age. Although the practice can help ensure children develop properly, few mothers were monitoring their children's growth.

Until recently, that is. With support from Feed the Future, growth monitoring has taken off among the 168 households of Wat Chre village.

"Nearly all of the mothers here are doing it. They finally understand how important it is to their children's health," Heam says.

In hundreds of villages like Wat Chre, Feed the Future-supported [mobile kitchens](#) have promoted growth monitoring to nearly 21,000 people who have attended nutrition training events. In addition, Feed the Future is supporting health volunteers like Heam who have transformed their homes into growth-monitoring stations equipped with scales and charts. The volunteers host monthly sessions, where they weigh the children and track their progress on charts that show optimum growth rates.

In conjunction with the nutrition and hygiene techniques taught by the mobile kitchens, growth monitoring is having a substantial impact on the health of thousands of children. In 187 villages in

Pursat that have received two visits by mobile kitchens, the number of children in the green, or optimum, zone for growth has increased from 85 percent to 91 percent; the number of children in the yellow zone has decreased from 13 to 8 percent; and the number in the red zone has decreased from 2 to 1 percent. These improvements are helping to address the serious problem of undernutrition, which causes one third of child deaths in Cambodia, according to UNICEF.

Youth Chroeb, a mother in Wat Chre village, began attending monthly growth-monitoring sessions at Heam's house after her son's birth in 2013. To ensure he stays within the green growth zone, Youth feeds him enriched rice porridge, a dish that she learned about at a mobile kitchen event.

"My boy is strong and healthy. As a mother, this makes me extremely happy," she says.